



#VillageHallsWeek

w/c 22 January 2018

ACRE and the ACRE Network are delighted to be running the first ever **Village Halls Week** in 2018, celebrating the network of 10,000 community hubs at the heart of England's rural communities.

Starting on **Monday 22 January**, ACRE will be sharing blogs and online materials as well as using social media to promote Village Halls – recognising their value and importance in sustaining rural areas. We aim to celebrate the diversity of these community buildings, share stories and experiences from those involved 'on the ground' and champion the volunteers at the heart of these local enterprises.

We hope that rural residents, hall users, local groups and organisations will join in with local authorities, MPs and national policy decision makers in saying '**Thank You!**' to the dedicated individuals running Village Halls for the benefit of their rural community.

We have prepared the following notes, tips and facts to encourage you to get involved with **#VillageHallsWeek** – helping us to show our appreciation for these rural community hubs.

1. Social Media accounts – Make sure you are connected:

- Twitter: @VillageHalls_wk
- Facebook: via @ACREnational
- Instagram: via @ACRE_national

2. Hashtags to follow, and use in your in your own posts

- #VillageHallsWeek
- #ACRENetwork
- #villagehalls / #communitybuildings / #communityhubs
- #ThankYou / #rural / #community / #volunteers

3. Some suggested social media activity to participate in

- *Show off 'your' hall* - Encourage people to share photographs of their local hall, include name of building and county in the message and #VillageHallsWeek
- *Why do people use 'your' community building? When did they last visit?* – Get people to share stories, photographs (selfies) and experiences and include #VillageHallsWeek in the message

- *Promote the services offered at 'your' hall* – Share some examples of events/services taking place, link to the hall website and #VillageHallsWeek
- *Raise the profile of 'your' fundraising activity* – Promote online collections, crowd funding events and ideas and include #VillageHallsWeek
- *Thank 'your' local committee members* – Post photographs of the committee, introduce them to the #VillageHallsWeek audience and tell everyone how brilliant they are at what they do!
- *Look to the future* – Use #VillageHallsWeek to tell ACRE and the ACRE Network what we should be championing to national policy makers and funders to support village and community buildings in future.

4. Key messages to share during the week

- There are 10,000 village halls and other community buildings in England's rural communities
 - More than 90,000 individuals, small businesses and professionals use England's village halls to earn their living, or part of it, during the year.
- Village halls, church halls and other community buildings remain a vital resource at the heart of many rural communities – acting as a hub for multiple local services
 - Around 1,000 village halls, or 10%, host a community enterprise such as post office, community shop, coffee shop, library, cinema or farmers' market. However, almost a quarter of all halls don't derive any financial benefit from this activity.
- Village Halls and other Community Buildings play a key role in reducing isolation in rural communities through providing a meeting place for local residents
- Nearly a quarter of halls were built before World War I, while an estimated 600 were built to commemorate World War I or individuals who perished during that conflict.

5. Interesting stats and facts to use during the week (compiled from ACRE research 2014):

- The average age of a village hall committee member is 58 – the age range stretches from 18 to 98.
- Each village hall hosts an average of nine life events, such as weddings, christening parties or wakes each year – a grand total of 90,000 gatherings.
- Village hall users and volunteers munch their way through a total of 47,500 packets of biscuits each week – washed down by 743,000 cups of tea. That's nearly 2.5 million packets of biscuits and 38.6 million cups of tea each year – or 9.6 million litres (2.1 million gallons).
- The most popular uses for village halls are preschool and nursery groups; fitness classes; dance classes; clubs and groups for older people including luncheon clubs, retirement clubs, the University of the Third Age; and organisations for young people – including Scouts and Guides, youth clubs, and Girls' and Boys' Brigades.
- The survey showed the growth in popularity of fitness classes, particularly Pilates and Zumba, and dance activities from ballet to salsa.
- Some of the more unusual activities at halls include Appalachian clog dancing, calligraphy, a big breakfast, a 'Friendly Friday' drop-in evening, curling and stick dressing.

6. Events

Whilst the majority of #VillageHallsWeek activity will be taking place online a number of ACRE Network members are running events in their area. The aim is to utilise the local ACRE Network member's experience and trusted relationships with halls in their area to offer events which are relevant and bespoke to local needs. We will be sharing and joining in with the events wherever possible

The local ACRE Network member's website will provide more information, but as an overview here is the confirmed/proposed activity that we are aware of at present:

Date	Content	Organisation/event website link
22 January	Cambridgeshire halls coffee morning with a 'funding focus'	Cambridgeshire ACRE
23 January	Derbyshire #VillageHallsWeek celebration at Baslow Village Hall	Rural Action Derbyshire
23 January	Essex #VillageHallsWeek coffee morning at Peldon & Wigsborough Community Hall	RCC of Essex
24 January	Gloucestershire County Village and Community Hall Network Event at the Westwoods Centre, Northleach	Gloucestershire RCC
24 January	Sussex event to include PAT training for Village Hall Committee members at Sussex House, Lewes	Action in rural Sussex
24 January	Northamptonshire coffee morning / networking / training event	Northamptonshire ACRE
25 January	Essex #VillageHallsWeek coffee morning at Fyfield Village Hall	RCC of Essex
25 January	Tees Valley Village Halls Conference at Emmanuel Church Hall, Saltburn	Tees Valley RCC
26 January	Buckinghamshire event for Chairs and Treasurers at Dunsmore Village Hall	Community Impact Bucks
27 January	Cumbria Community Buildings Event at Bothel Village Hall	ACTion in with communities in Cumbria
TBC	Community buildings 'legal clinic' in Shropshire	Shropshire RCC

7. ACRE Contacts (for any further information/enquiries)

- Community Manager, Chris Cowcher – c.cowcher@acre.org.uk / 01285 653477
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